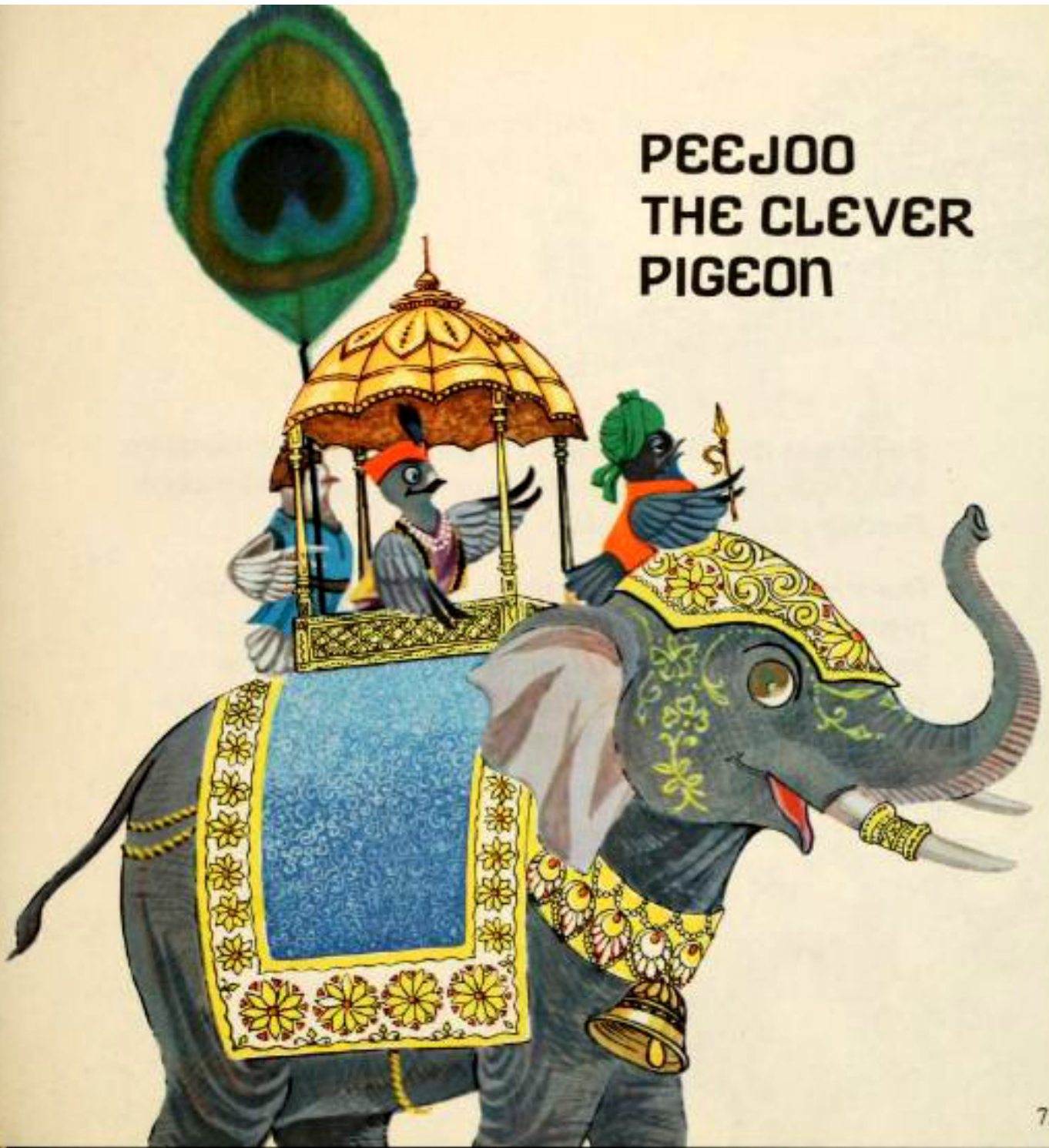


PEEJOO THE CLEVER PIGEON





Peejoo was the smallest pigeon in the whole pigeon kingdom, which was ruled by a Raja who was very proud and wicked. Everyone was afraid of him.

Our story begins on a very cold winter day. All the other pigeons put on their warm clothes but poor Peejoo had nothing to wear. He said to himself, "I must get some clothes. They will be very fine clothes indeed. First I must get some cotton to make the cloth."

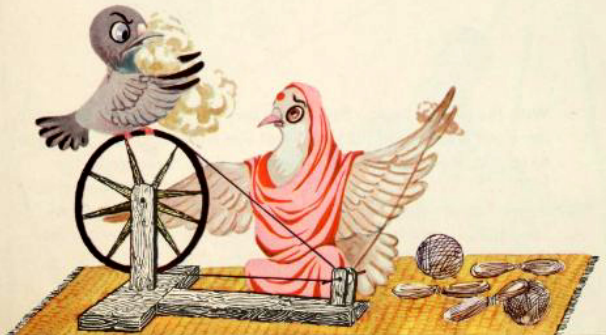
So Peejoo flew off to a cotton field and gathered whole armfuls of cotton.

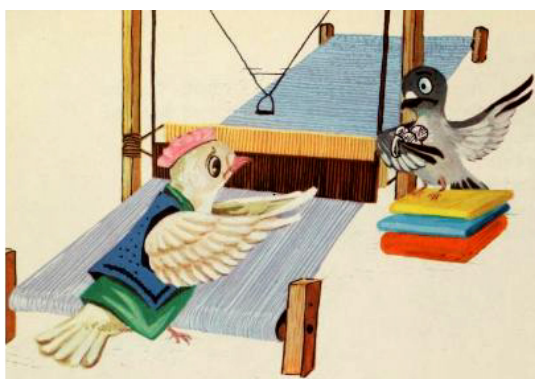




He took this to the man who fluffed cotton for spinning. The man said, "Go away. I don't have time for beggars like you." But Peejoo was clever. "I'll have to tell the Raja that you called him a beggar," he said. The man was very frightened of the Raja. "Brother Peejoo, I didn't know that this was the Raja's cotton," he cried. "I'll fluff it now—at once." And he fluffed the cotton into cotton wool.

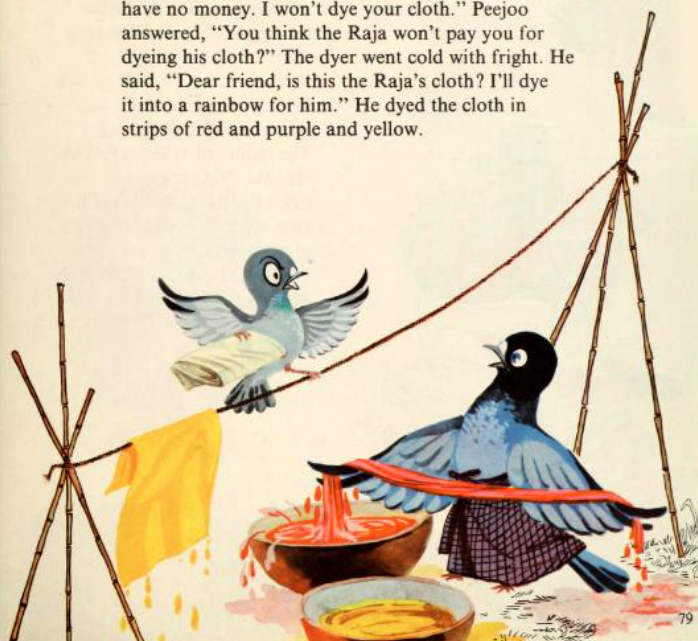
Peejoo took the cotton wool to the spinner, who said, "Go and do your own spinning, you lazy pigeon." Peejoo tried the same trick. "I'll have to let the Raja know that you called him lazy," he answered. The spinner shook with fright. She said, "Dear Mr. Peejoo, I'll spin the Raja's cotton as fast as the wind." Whir—whir—whir went the spinning wheel. Soon all the cotton wool was spun into balls of thread.





With the thread Peejoo flew to the weaver, who said, "Go away, my cloth is too good for you." But Peejoo answered, "I'm going to tell the Raja that you say that your cloth is too good for him." The weaver turned pale. "My friend, only the best cloth is good enough for the Raja," he said. "I'll weave it for him." His fingers flew across the loom. In and out, in and out went the thread. Soon the cloth was woven.

Peejoo took the cloth to the dyer, who said, "You have no money. I won't dye your cloth." Peejoo answered, "You think the Raja won't pay you for dyeing his cloth?" The dyer went cold with fright. He said, "Dear friend, is this the Raja's cloth? I'll dye it into a rainbow for him." He dyed the cloth in strips of red and purple and yellow.





Now Peejoo flew with the coloured cloth to the tailor, who said, "I can't stitch your clothes. Fly away pigeon!" Peejoo replied, "The Raja will be angry when he hears that you won't stitch his clothes." The tailor fell at Peejoo's feet. He said, "Of course, I'll stitch the Raja's clothes. I'll even stitch your clothes if you promise not to complain to the Raja about me." The tailor stitched red trousers, a purple shirt, a yellow waistcoat and a red cap.

At last Peejoo had his new clothes. He thought, "I look like a very important pigeon. I'm sure even the Raja would be happy to see me."





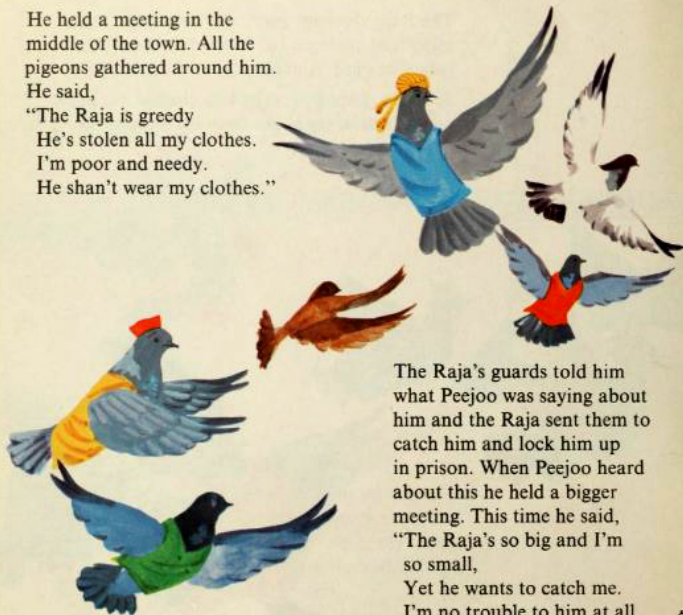
So off he flew to the Raja's palace.

Peejoo was very pleased with his new clothes. He forgot that the Raja was proud and wicked, and flew around the palace crying, "Raja, my name is Peejoo. See how grand I look—grand enough to see you in your palace."

The Raja was very angry. He shouted, "Take away that cheeky bird. Throw him out of the palace at once. And strip him off his finery."

So again, poor Peejoo had no clothes. He knew he just had to try to get them back somehow.

He held a meeting in the middle of the town. All the pigeons gathered around him. He said,
 "The Raja is greedy
 He's stolen all my clothes.
 I'm poor and needy.
 He shan't wear my clothes."



The Raja's guards told him what Peejoo was saying about him and the Raja sent them to catch him and lock him up in prison. When Peejoo heard about this he held a bigger meeting. This time he said,
 "The Raja's so big and I'm so small,
 Yet he wants to catch me.
 I'm no trouble to him at all,
 Yet he wants to catch me."

Hearing this, the Raja thought, "People will call me a bully. It's better if I forget about this silly pigeon." And he ordered his guards not to catch Peejoo after all. Now Peejoo held the biggest meeting that had ever been held. He said,
 "The Raja can't catch me.
 The Raja is afraid of me.
 The Raja can't match me.
 He's very, very afraid of me."



When they heard this, all the pigeons said, "Let's over-throw this Raja. He was always proud and wicked. Now he's frightened too. Let's throw him out."

The pigeons went in a huge crowd to the palace.





The Raja saw them coming and was so frightened that he flew away out of the window.

Everyone agreed that Peejoo deserved to be made the new Raja. He ruled long and wisely, was good and kind, and looked splendid in his red trousers, purple shirt, and yellow waistcoat.